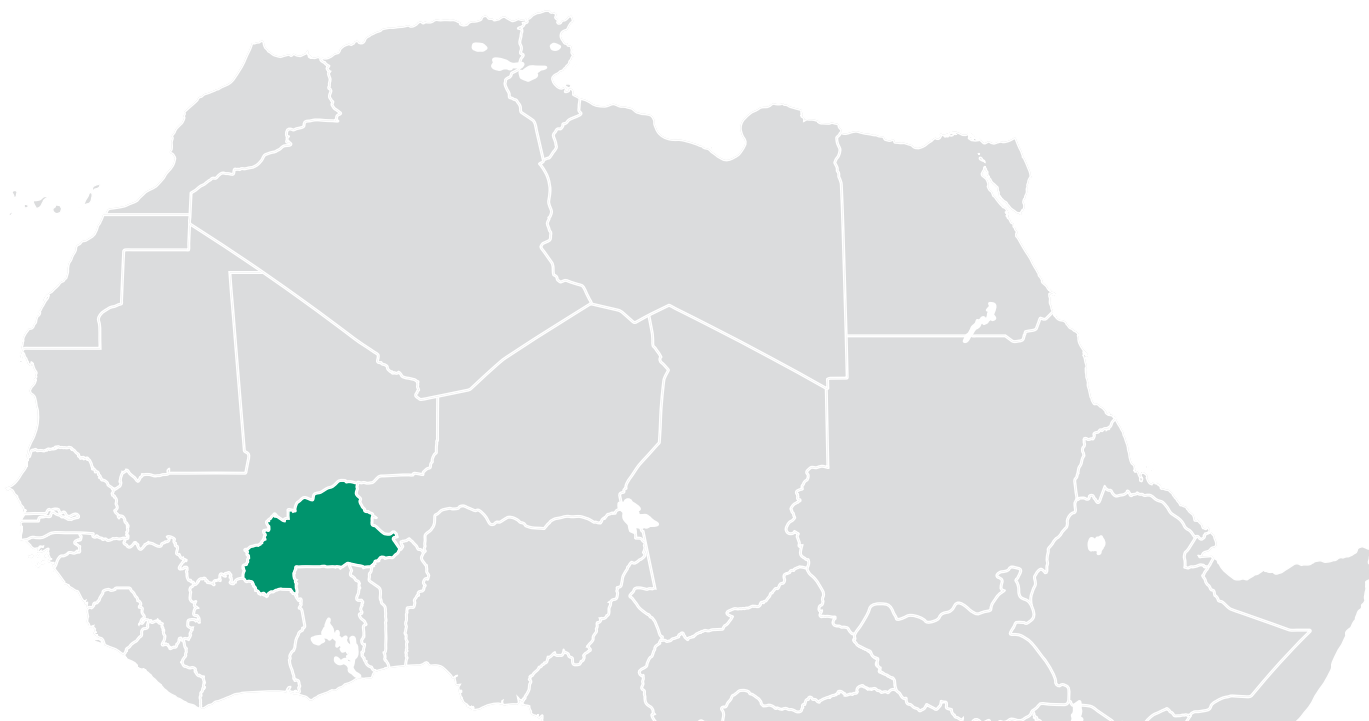




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SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

BURKINA FASO



ECA

Program information

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Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems is a global knowledge and resource hub that actively supports national efforts to develop, strengthen, and scale-up CRVS systems. It collaborates with organizations and experts to broker access to information and expertise, including global standards, tools, research evidence, and relevant good practice.

The Centre of Excellence was established with funding from Global Affairs Canada and IDRC and contributes directly to the work of the Global Financing Facility, a key financing platform of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

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International Development Research Centre
PO Box 8500
Ottawa, ON, Canada
Email: crvs@idrc.ca
www.CRVSystems.ca

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief introduction to the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system in Burkina Faso.

The information was collected through a questionnaire completed by the General Directorate for the Modernization of Civil Status in March 2020 and supplemented by a desk review of available documents. Among other things, the report presents:

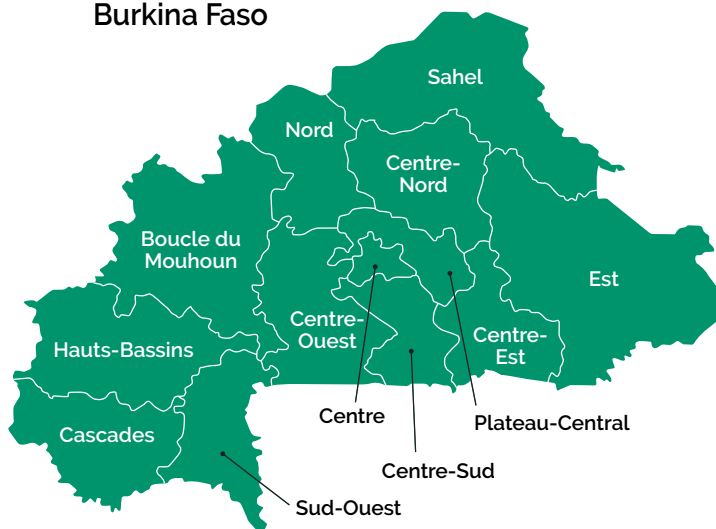
- Background information on the country;
- Selected indicators relevant for CRVS improvement processes;
- Stakeholder activities; and
- Resources available and needed to strengthen CRVS systems.

The report will also serve as an important benchmarking tool for the improvement initiatives of other countries.

Brief country profile

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa that is surrounded by six countries: Mali to the north, Niger to the east, Benin and Togo to the southeast, Ghana to the south, and Côte d'Ivoire to the southwest. Formerly called the Republic of Upper Volta (1958–1984), the country was renamed Burkina Faso on 4 August 1984 by President Thomas Isidore Sankara. Its citizens are known as Burkinabè.

Burkina Faso



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Burkina Faso is subdivided into 13 administrative regions. These regions encompass 45 provinces and 351 departments. Each region is administered by a governor.

- Land area:¹ 274,200 km²
- Population: 20.9 million (estimated), with an annual growth rate of 2.9 percent. The population is made up of 49.7 percent males and 50.3 percent females.²
- Capital city: Ouagadougou
- Official working language: French
- Ministry responsible for civil registration: Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
- Civil registration agency: General Directorate for the Modernization of Civil Status (DGMEC)
- National statistical office: National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD)

CRVS dimensions

Births

Completeness of birth registration ³	Not available
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	77% (2010) ⁴
Births attended by skilled health personnel	79.8% (2016) ⁵
Women aged 15–49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	80% (2015) ⁶
DPT1 immunization coverage among 1-year-olds ⁷	88% (2016) ⁸
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	38.42 (2018)
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	5.3 (2017)
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15–19)	104.3 (2017) ⁹
Population under age 15	Not available
Institutional deliveries: percentage of deliveries in a health facility	80% (2015) ¹⁰

Deaths

Completeness of death registration	Not available
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	Not available
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	50.43 (2017) ¹¹
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	28.82 (2017) ⁹
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	343 (2015) ¹²

Marriages and divorces

Marriage rate	Not available
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 15	Not available
Women aged 20–24 first married or in union before age 18	Not available
Divorce registration rate	Not available

Vital statistics including causes of death data

Compilation and dissemination of civil registration-based statistics	Not available
Medically certified causes of death	Not available

Civil registration system

The French colonial authorities conducted the registration of civil status events in several countries, including Burkina Faso. It was the parish priest's responsibility to keep a register of baptisms, marriages, and burials.

France later regularized the process by ordering that the registers be deposited in duplicate at the clerk's offices of the royal court. Growing interest in the civil and legal rights of individuals led the states to make this system compulsory; it was incorporated into the Napoleonic Civil Code of 1804.

Before the end of the colonial period until independence in 1960, there were two civil status systems in French West Africa: citizens with French civil status who were subject to the French civil code with a modern civil status, and those subject to customary status with an Indigenous civil status.

In Burkina Faso, the civil status system was instituted by General Order No. 4602/AP of 16 August 1950. It regulated the civil status of persons governed by local customs, which came to be known as the Order organizing Indigenous civil status. The General Order of 1950 established main and secondary civil status centres.

When Upper Volta became Burkina Faso in 1984, the function and operation of the entire civil registry system had to be reformed. At first, the system France had imposed during the colonial era was maintained as a transitional measure. Then, new legislation was created for a civil registration system that was open to all inhabitants. It was in this spirit that the Persons and Family Code was adopted on 16 November 1989; it came into force on 4 August 1990. Yet until 2006, 16 years later, civil status centres had to use the three-part registers instituted by the General Order of 1950. It was not until March 2, 2006, that Order No. 2006-009/MJ/SG/DACPS set out the models for civil status records (Article 70 of the Code of Persons and the Family).

In 2011, the authorities of Burkina Faso stated that they planned to digitize all civil status services to modernize the entire civil status system and to make civil status records more secure. Thus, the General Directorate for the Modernization of Civil Status (DGMEC) was created.

After that government was dissolved, the new authorities decided to make civil status a major focus of the decentralization policy. However, the general directorate was abolished in 2015 by the transitional government. After a year of political transition (November 2014 to November 2015), the new government that emerged from the presidential elections decided to put civil status management back at the centre of priority actions. It is found in the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the reference framework for intervention by all of Burkina Faso's development partners.

Legislative framework

The laws governing civil registration in Burkina Faso are included with the main texts (laws and regulations) that govern civil status:

- Zatu (Ordinance) AN VII-0013 of 6 November 1989, establishing and implementing the Code of Persons and the Family;
- Act No. 055-2004/AN (2004) on the General Code of Territorial Communities, as amended;
- Act No. 015-2019/AN of 2 May 2019 on the organization of the judiciary;
- Law No. 025-2018/AN of 31 May 2018, on the Penal Code;
- Decree No. 58-251 of 1 March 1958, on the Family Record Book;
- Decree No. 63-445 of 25 August 1963, establishing the powers of diplomatic and consular agents with regard to civil status;
- Decree No. 2017-0311/PRES/PM/MATDS of 12 May 2017, adopting the revised National Civil Status Strategy (SNEC);

- Decree No. 2017-0343/PRES/PM/MATDS of 12 May 2017, adopting the 2017–2021 action plan of the National Civil Status Strategy (PA-SNEC);
- Decree No. 2019-139/PRES/PM/SGG-CM of 18 February 2019, on the powers of members of the government;
- Order No. 2005-0002/MATD/SG/DGCAT of 26 January 2005, designating the Ouagadougou Town Hall as the main centre for transcribing civil status records drawn up abroad; and
- Order No. 2006-009/MJ/SG/DACPS of 2 March 2006, establishing models for civil status records.

Demographic events indicated in legislation include births, marriages, deaths, divorces, adoptions, and recognition of children. These cover all legal geographic areas of Burkina Faso, its diplomatic and consular representations, and its entire population – including non-citizens and refugees – and provide for the collection of vital statistics. In addition, the indicators concerning them provide for the collection of statistical data by the various ministerial departments.

Management, organization, and operations

In Burkina Faso, the DGMEC – under the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization – is the institution responsible for civil registration.

These are the other ministries and agencies responsible for the registration of vital events:

- Ministry of Health, which issues birth and death notifications in public and private health facilities;
- Ministry of Justice, which ensures compliance with procedures and the legality of documents issued; and
- Ministry in charge of Foreign Affairs, which deals with the civil status of Burkinabè living abroad through diplomatic and consular representations with territorial jurisdiction.

There are two types of civil status centres:

- The main centres located at the headquarters of municipalities, districts, and diplomatic and consular missions. The acts registered in the main centres are birth, marriage, and death certificates; and
- Secondary centres attached to the main centre of the commune to which they belong. They are in villages, city sectors, and near health facilities where only birth and death certificates are recorded.

The process works as follows:

- Each vital event follows a separate process: births and deaths must be declared to the registrar within two months of the date of the birth or death;
- The declaration of marital status is made to the registrar (or the delegated registrar); and
- The registers are transcribed in duplicate, one copy of which is kept at the town hall and the other forwarded to the civil court.

For marriages, after filing, banns are published at the town hall for 30 days. The registrar receives the future spouses and their witnesses on the day of the celebration, which is public. The arrangements are recorded in the current year's registers, which are kept in duplicate. An extract and a full copy of the record is given to the couples at the end of the marriage ceremony.

National CRVS systems coordination mechanisms

A national coordination mechanism provides a forum for stakeholders in CRVS systems. It is made up of the institutions in Table 1.

Table 1: National CRVS coordination committees.

National coordination mechanism	Member departments, services, and agencies
Steering Committee for the National Civil Status Strategy	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Ministry of the Family, Ministry of the Economy (National Institute of Statistics and Demography), Ministries of the Civil Service, Digital Economy, Education and the Family, umbrella organizations of local authorities, European Union, UNICEF, UN Population Fund, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, non-governmental organizations, etc.
Partnership Framework for Civil Status Actors	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, and Family, Ministry of Security, Ministry of the Economy (National Institute of Statistics and Demography), Ministry of the Civil Service, Ministry of the Digital Economy, Ministry of Education, umbrella organizations of local authorities, customary and religious leaders, non-governmental organizations working in the field of civil status, European Union, UNICEF, UN Population Fund, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, WHO, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs (Luxembourg), GIZ (German cooperation), Danida (Denmark cooperation), Plan International, Aide et Action, Citizenship Lab, and The Community of Sant-Egidio, and public sector organizations
Review Committee for the Civil Status Budget Program	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Ministry of the Family, Ministry of the Economy (National Institute of Statistics and Demography), Ministry of the Civil Service (National School of Administration and Magistracy), Ministry of the Digital Economy, umbrella organizations of local authorities, European Union, UNICEF, and UNFPA

Legislation relating to the establishment and operation of the coordinating committees is stipulated in Decree No. 2017-0311/PRES/PM/MATDS 12 May 2017, adopting the revised National Civil Status Strategy (SNEC).

Accessibility of civil registration services

The lowest administrative level is the parish level. There are 1,193 local civil registration offices or service points in the country: 370 in urban areas and 823 in rural areas. There are 1,937 local civil registrars: 1,114 in rural areas and 823 in urban areas.

The average distance from most households to the nearest local registration office is 5 to 10 km. The average estimated time it would take most households to reach their nearest local registration office by foot or by bicycle is 1 to 4 hours; by car or motorcycle it would take less than 1 hour.

Registration of vital events

The recording of demographic events covers all segments of the country's population and all geographical regions.

The Code of Persons and the Family established four categories of registers that civil registrars (mayors and their deputies) keep and maintain in the main centres:

- Birth register;
- Marriage register;
- Death register; and
- Register of miscellaneous acts (life certificate, residence certificate, certificate of non-remarriage, etc.).

In secondary centres, only two categories of registers are kept:

- Birth register; and
- Death register (Article 69 of the Code of Persons and the Family).

Under Article 68 of the Code of Persons and the Family, civil status records are entered in registers that are kept in duplicate in each civil status centre. The registrar closes the civil registers at the end of each year. In the month of closure, a copy of the registers kept in the main centres, and in the secondary centres attached to them, is deposited in the archives of the main centres. Officers of the main centres send duplicates to the public prosecutor at the civil court with territorial jurisdiction. The public prosecutor checks them and draws up a report before depositing them at the registry (articles 70 to 75 of the Code of Persons and the Family).

Birth registration – All births must be reported to the registrar of civil status of the place of birth within two months of the date of birth. The father, mother, one of the ascendants or closest relatives, or any person who attended the birth must declare the birth. The midwife or doctor who delivered the child must give the person declaring the birth a certificate to present.

After this two-month period, the registrar may record a birth only by a judgement handed down by the departmental or district court of the place of birth. The judgement must be transcribed in the registers for the current year.

Marriage registration – Under Article 273 and following the Code of Persons and the Family, marriage is celebrated publicly by the registrar of civil status of the place where the marriage file is compiled, in the presence of two adult witnesses. There are two types of matrimonial regimes: monogamy and polygamy. Before the celebration, each spouse delivers the documents proving that they are capable of marriage.

Banns are published at the doors of the town hall for 30 consecutive days. At the end of the ceremony, the registrar gives the spouses a family record book.

Death registration – Under Article 116 and following the Code of Persons and the Family, deaths must be declared within two months to the registrar of civil status of the place of death. A death can be declared by the surviving spouse, ascendants or descendants, or any person having the most accurate and complete information possible on the civil status of the deceased.

In urban centres where there are dispensaries or hospitals, death is established by a doctor or nurse, who draws up a death certificate. The death must be mentioned in the margin of the birth certificate of the deceased and of their spouse.

After two months, civil registrars cannot register deaths. The declaratory judgement of death, which is rendered by the district court or departmental court of the place of death, is transcribed in the registers of the current year.

The health sector is very involved in reporting births and deaths. In 2015, 79.8 percent of births were attended by skilled health staff.¹³

Backlog of unregistered births

In 2017, only 49.04 percent of births were registered within the legal two-month deadlines. The percentage of births not declared within two months is 50.96 percent. Out of a total of 741,830 births registered in health facilities, 363,827 births were registered within the legal deadlines.

Registration fee

Registration of vital events is free of charge (Table 2).

Table 2: Fees

Vital event	Cost (US\$)	Remarks
Birth	Free	Full copies are free of charge; however, stamp fees of 200 to 300 CFA francs (US\$0.50 ¹⁴) are paid for extracts, depending on the commune.
Marriage	Free	The prenuptial visit certificate costs on average 5,000 CFA francs (US\$9.15). The residence tax for the couple costs on average 10,000 CFA francs (US\$10.30). Full copies are free of charge; however, stamp fees of 200 to 300 CFA francs (US\$0.50) are paid for extracts, depending on the commune.
Divorce	Free	Court order (judicial act)
Death	Free	Full copies are free of charge; however, the cost of the stamps (US\$0.50) is paid to obtain the deed.

Vital statistics system

The National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) has the legal mandate to collect, compile, analyze, publish, disseminate, and coordinate the national statistics system.

Vital statistics

The INSD has not been collecting statistics on causes of death; most vital statistics are based on projections and data collection through surveys like the ongoing Demographic Health Survey.

No vital statistics report has been published. The DGMEC and INSD have begun to define the variables for generating vital statistics in consultation with other ministries, like the Ministry of Health.

The development partners that support the creation of a vital statistics system in Burkina Faso are

- the European Union;
- UNICEF;
- UNFPA;
- the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and
- Programme of Support for Public Management and Statistics.

Causes of death

The questionnaire provided no information on causes of death. However, other sources indicate the infant mortality rate at 50.43 deaths per 1,000 live births (Figure 1).¹⁵

Figure 1: Infant mortality rate.

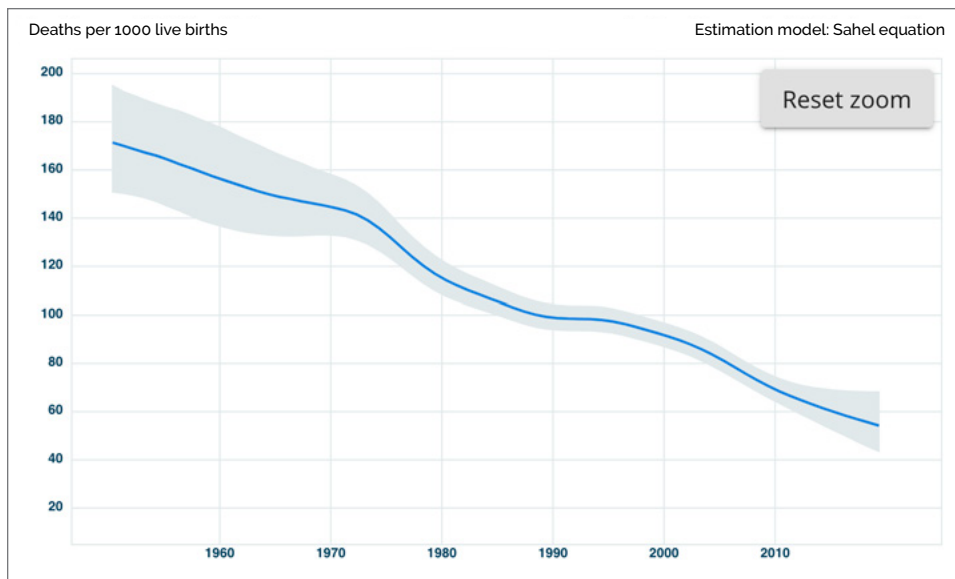
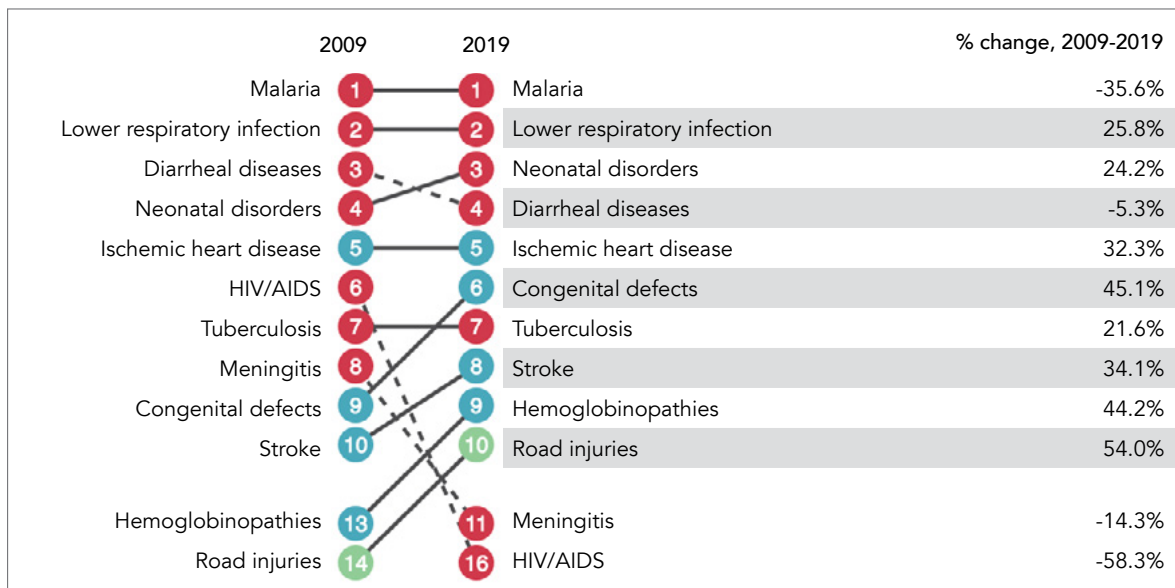


Figure 2: Leading causes of death between 2009 and 2019.



Source: The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation¹⁶

Digitization

Computerization

Through DGMEC, the Government of Burkina Faso has started using information and communication technologies, including mobile technology. This is a fast, secure, and less costly way to achieve a reliable and secure civil status for the country.

Mobile technology application

DGMEC uses the mobile application iCivil for civil registration. This system simplifies the registration process and produces life event statistics. The unique identification code offered to each citizen links them to other ID systems.¹⁷

With iCivil, a centralized digital registry traces births, marriages, divorces, and deaths. It also enables the declaration and registration of births and the issuing of birth certificates and other documents. It is based on a unique identifier to identify and authenticate newborns and maintain secure digital identification throughout life (Figure 3). An encrypted text message transmits information quickly, even if connectivity is poor.

The delivery of the birth certificate takes place at the registry office.

- Upon presentation of the iCivil card, the parents collect the birth certificate from the registrar;
- The birth certificate is printed with the image of the bubble code.

The iCivil card must be kept by the holder and will be used to issue other administrative documents (unique national identifier).

All processes are centrally monitored at DGMEC in Ouagadougou. However, the legal and institutional framework needs to be better formalized for better coordination and collaboration between the different organizations.

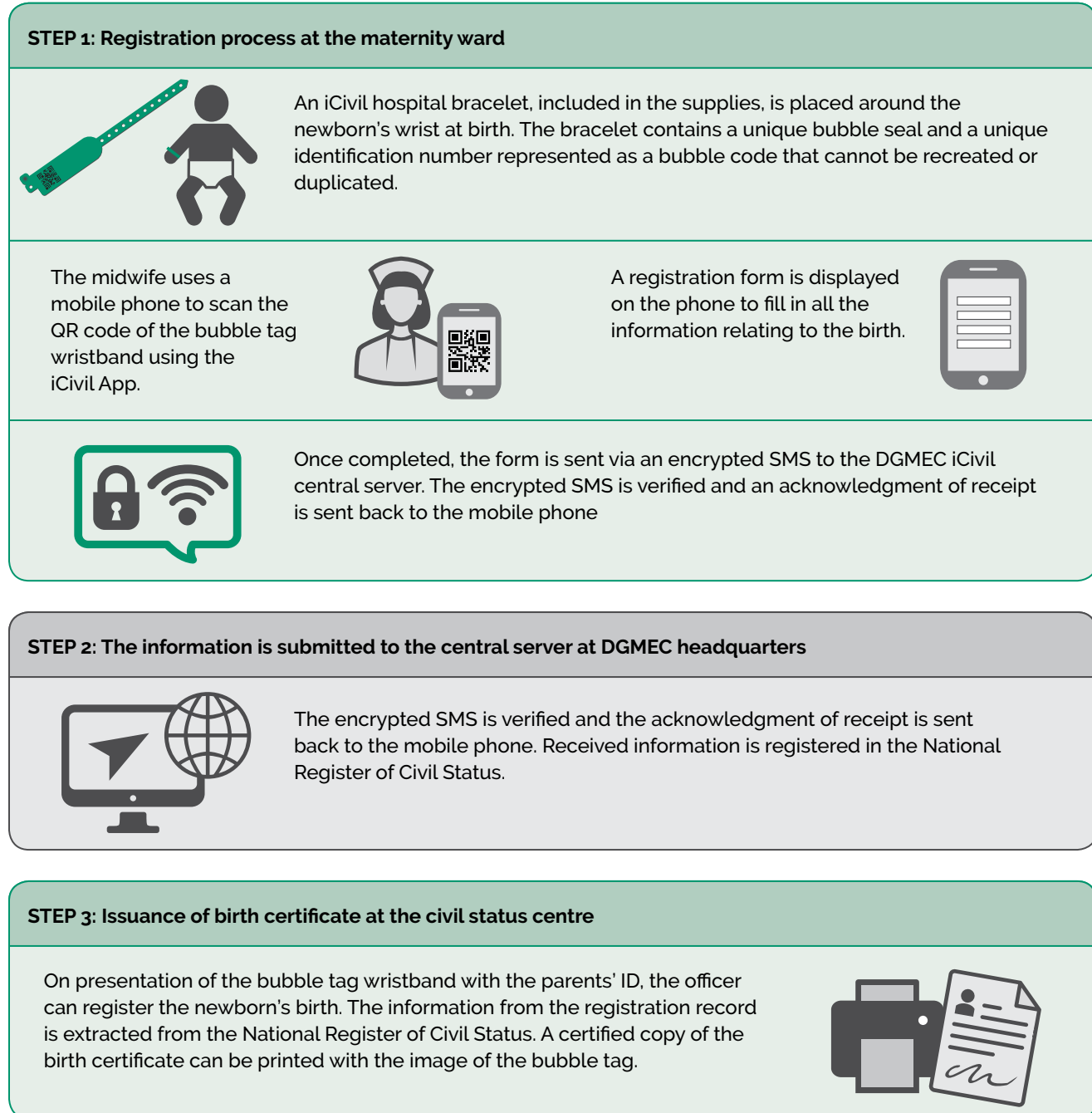
Computer use is outlined in Table 3.

Arrangements with mobile network operators and the use of modern technology have emerged in the health sector. Mobile technology is not used for reporting demographic events.

Table 3: Use of computers to register civil events.

Centre	Are computers used for civil registration?	Remarks
Local registrars across the country	No	Now that iCivil is being used, the secondary civil registration centres will use computers to issue birth and death certificates.
Urban centres	Yes	The main civil registration centres use computers to issue civil status documents. This will increase as iCivil is scaled up.
Healthcare institutions	No	Now that iCivil is being used, secondary civil registration centres will use computers to issue birth and death certificates.

Figure 3: Registration and certification process.



Link with identification system

An existing identification (ID) system is linked to civil registration, but the issuing of ID cards falls under the National Identification Office at the Ministry of Security. To obtain a national ID card, applicants must present a birth certificate and, if applicable, a marriage certificate for married women. To obtain a certificate of nationality, applicants must also provide their birth certificate and that of one of their parents. Registration for the national ID card is mandatory for all Burkinabés aged 15 or older. The Burkinabé national ID card is valid for 10 years.¹⁸

A data protection law is in place, but there is no common unique number for civil registration and identity management.

Link with the health sector

The sector is well involved in the reporting of births and deaths. Births attended by skilled health staff (percent of total) in Burkina Faso was reported at 79.8 percent in 2015, according to the World Bank.

Improvement initiatives and external support

Improvement plan and budget

A five-year (2017–2021) national strategic plan has been created to improve the CRVS system. Also, a thorough assessment of the CRVS system has been done.

Budgetary allocations and requirements

The total estimated cost for the entire period is US\$65.2 million.

In the current fiscal year 2020–2021, the State Treasury has allocated US\$17.74 million to the civil registration system. No specific amount is indicated from the development partners providing in-kind or other support.

Activities defined as high priorities

Some high-priority activities identified in the national plan lack funding, especially the modernization and security of civil status documents (Table 4).

Table 4: High-priority activities in the national plan.

	Estimated cost (\$US)	Expected government allocation (\$US)	Expected budget variances (\$US)	Remarks
Modernization and security of civil status documents	US\$40.9 million	US\$6.6 million	US\$34.3 million	The action plan covers 2017 to 2021 where activities have been programmed annually with costs.

Support from development partners

A number of international, non-governmental, and other organizations support the improvement of Burkina Faso's civil registration system. Some of these organizations are listed in Table 5, along with their mandate.

Table 5: Organizations that provide support to the CRVS systems improvement initiative.

Organization	Mandate
European Union	Budgetary support to the Burkinabé state
UNICEF	Financial and material support
United Nations Population Fund	Support for the roll-out of the iCivil System
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Financial and material support
Programme of Support for Public Management and Statistics	Working in collaboration with the National Statistics Office
EDUCO (coordinator of a consortium of non-governmental organizations and civil service organizations)	Financial and material support
Save the Children	Support to birth registration
Terre des Hommes	Technical and financial support for the production of life statistics
Plan International	Technical and material support
Fondazione ACCRA	Technical and material support
BRAVO Program	Technical and material support
Planète Enfants et Développement	Technical and material support
Children Believe	Technical and material support
Labo Citoyennetés	Technical and institutional support

Conclusion

Burkina Faso is in its fourth year of a five-year strategic plan. The plan sets clear priorities for developing a well-functioning CRVS system while identifying new challenges and opportunities. Some major challenges are:

- Political instability;
- Inadequate budget;
- Distance to registration centres;
- Capacity and skills needed for registration, monitoring, and evaluation; and
- Compilation and dissemination of vital statistics.

Cause-of-death registration and the generating of vital statistics are critical aspects of a functioning CRVS system that Burkina Faso is lacking. DGMEC is revitalizing the national coordination mechanisms and planning the nationwide expansion of the iCivil system.

Areas of required support are:

- Financial support to finance the 2017–2021 national civil status strategy action plan;
- Capacity-building for managers for better planning, monitoring, and coordination of the national CRVS system;
- Strengthening of the institutional framework by staffing and equipping a headquarters dedicated to the DGMEC for a national base and proven leadership; and
- Technical support for the drafting of a specific law on civil status.

Resources

Websites

Civil identification: oni.bf

Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization: matd.gov.bf/accueil

iCivil: icivil.bf/presentation_en.php

National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD): insd.bf

UNICEF – Burkina Faso:
data.unicef.org/country/bfa

World Health Organization (WHO) – Burkina Faso:
who.int/countries/bfa/en

Additional materials

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